

## Monday, June 16, 2003 – Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting

June 16, 2003

### I. CALL TO ORDER

Board of Alderman Finance Chair, William White, Jr., called a joint Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee and the Board of Aldermen to order in the committee room at city hall, at 7:15 p.m., to discuss the FY04 budget.

### II. ROLL CALL

School Committee present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Murray, and Ms. Rossetti.

Board of Aldermen present were President O'Donovan, Ms. Provost, Mr. Desmond, Mr. Curtatone, Mr. White, Mr. Roche, Ms. Heuston, Mr. Taylor, Mr. McCallum Mr. Connolly, and Mr. Trane.

Mayor Gay was absent.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Marie B. Ferrari, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration, Mr. Anthony C. Caliri, Human Resources Manager, and Dr. Steven F. Jenkins, District Administrator for Student Services were also present, along with approximately forty members of the audience.

### III. FY04 Budget Discussion – School Committee/Board of Aldermen

Dr. Argenziano gave an overview of the school committee's condensed priorities of the FY2004 budget, focusing not only on the presented \$46.4 million figure but also the supplemental budget the school committee voted on at the June 3<sup>d</sup> Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting. The Somerville Public Schools Fiscal Year 2004 Budget document presented at the June 11, 2003 Public Hearing was provided to the members of the Board of Aldermen and Dr. Argenziano highlighted what the committee accomplished from the start when the process began back in January. The Superintendent outlined and explained the school department reductions as they took place, as follows:

(1/1/03)	FY04	\$54,000,000.
(7/1/03)	FY03	\$52,000,000.
(3/03)	FY03	\$50,200,000.
5/1/03	FY04	\$46,200,000.
Layoffs –		
	City	180
	Schools	143 (79.4%)
Total City Reduction		
		5.3%
		7.5m
	7.5m (city)	
	4.0m (schools)	53%

The Superintendent expressed to the Board of Aldermen that throughout the reduction process, Administration and the School Committee worked very hard at holding on to the things really important to the public schools, those being full day Pre-Kindergarten, full day Kindergarten, small class size, small schools, a structured curriculum, a new reading series, a new math series, day care until 6:00 p.m., and not losing any of the vocational programs. The committee

**III. FY04 Budget Discussion (cont.)**

maintained that structure in order to stay within the \$46.2 million budget. Referring to the last 4 pages of the document, he informed the Board that the school committee deliberated over four evenings of meetings and came up with an addendum to the \$46.2 million budget. The Superintendent also mentioned that while watching the overview given earlier by the Mayor and Mr. McGinn, what he observed was the \$4 million dollar cut to the school department which represents 1/3 of the \$12 million deficit over two years, as stated in the presentation. The school department also took \$1.8 million reduction in March FY03, totaling \$5.8 million over two years. The city's budget represents \$1 million of additional taxes, \$2.4 million in sale of buildings, \$3.4 million in total increase in revenue. The deficit is \$12 million, less \$3.4 million brings the total to \$8.6 million. If the school department is, in fact, 1/3 of the \$8.6 million, the amount should be \$2.9 instead of \$4 million. Dr. Argenziano stressed that after viewing the presentation he feels the school department was not treated fairly. There are 180 people being cut from the total city and 143 are school employees. He asked the Board of Aldermen, in their deliberations, to think about these concerns. The Superintendent has 1150 employees who ask him those kinds of questions and he wants to be honest, direct, and trustworthy with them.

Continuing with his presentation, Dr. Argenziano talked about the core services needing the supplementary positions (listed in the last four pages of the document). The school committee added this addendum to the budget and unanimously voted a bottom line of \$47,570,000. He explained that \$250,000. is for operations, of which 60% is special education transportation and tuition and the other 40% runs all of the schools for supplies and materials. The rationale for the increase, exceeding the Mayor's bottom line of \$46,200,000. centers around direct costs to the student population attending the Somerville Public Schools.

As a follow up to the Superintendent's presentation, School Committee Finance Chair, Ms. Murray, wanted the Board of Aldermen to be aware that even adding back everything on this list, it is not adding back a full complement of services. The committee was not comfortable at \$46.2 or \$46.4 million for a bottom line figure and that is why they voted the additional monies.

Following the presentation, discussion took place. Dr. Argenziano answered the questions asked by the members of the Board of Aldermen.

At 8:00 p.m., Board of Alderman Finance Chair, Mr. White, announced this portion of the Finance meeting will stand in recess, and will reconvene when the school department finishes with their regularly scheduled June 16, 2003, 8:00 p.m. Regular Meeting.

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**June 16, 2003 REGULAR MEETING**

June 16, 2003

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:05 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Mayor Gay, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Murray, and Ms. Rossetti,.

Alderman O'Donovan was absent.

**III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

A Resolution was presented to Mrs. Maureen Hilliard, retiring Principal of the Winter Hill Community School by Ward V School Committee Member, Ms. Katrina Murray. The Resolution can be found on page 187.

Ms. Harris, Ward IV School Committee Member and Ms. Taylor, Ward VI School Committee Member presented Citations to the following Crew Team members who placed first in the novice division in the State Rowing Championship Regatta. The winning time was 5:19:03.

Max Jackson, Nathaniel Dias, John Sutherland, Robert Gibson, William DePaula, Daniel Lemus, Ergys Huta, Armand Veliaj, Alexis Hovanesian, Jeff Lyons, Jigar Rana, Dennis Chaves, and Coach Sebastian Lapha.

Ms. Harris, Ward IV School Committee Member and Ms. Taylor, Ward VI School Committee Member presented Citations to the following Crew Team members who participated in the novice division in the State Rowing Championship Regatta:

Allan Gehant, Co-Director, Gentle Giant Rowing Club, Gracio Garcia, Co-Director, Gentle Giant Rowing Club, Amanda Foley, Ashley Tremonte, Ashley Aruda, Rebecca Rais, Christine Donegan, Courtney Vivian, Elaine Maalouf, Augusta Friendsmith, Katie Schaejbe, Kimberly Cusack, Meg Rabinowit, Meaghan Sullivan, Maura Canavan, Nora Allen-Wiles, Rahem Attia, Sally Reardon, Tiel Reardon, and Coach Heathr Jeffco.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes were approved as follows by voice vote:

May 15, 2003

- Rules Management Committee of the Whole Meeting

May 19, 2003:

- Regular Meeting

June 2, 2003

- Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting

June 2, 2003

- Regular Meeting

Referring to page 170, (Item XIII. Moment of Silence), Ms. Cardoso requested the minutes to be amended, as follows:

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (cont.)**

Ms. Cardoso reported with regret the death of the following person:

- o James J. Rodrigues, (May 24), Crossing Guard at Concord Avenue and Springfield Street.

Ms. Murray reported with regret the death of the following person:

- o Richard Rossetti, Sr., (May 23), Father-in-law of Mary Jo Rossetti, School Committee Chair.

A moment of silence was observed and letters of sympathy will be sent to their families.

Mr. Sullivan accepted the minutes of June 2, 2003 Regular Meeting, as amended.

June 3, 2003

- Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting

**V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Student representative Maya Nitzberg reported on the following items this evening:

Ms. Nitzberg reported that the students have been working hard on their finals and the last day of exams is tomorrow, June 17<sup>th</sup>.

Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> is the last day of school and students will be dismissed at 12:00 noon.

Over the summer the senior class advisors will be planning events such as assemblies, for the incoming freshmen, September 2003, to welcome them to the school. Ms. Nitzberg is looking forward to this being a great success.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. Publicly gave three cheers to the Class of 2003 for a great Graduation on June 9<sup>th</sup>, and also Class Day on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The Superintendent mentioned for the Class of 2004, graduation exercises at Tufts Field will be unavailable. He has tentatively accepted Tufts offer to go into the Gantcher Center (indoor facility) with a seating capacity of 5,000-6,000. The Superintendent will keep everyone posted. Mayor Gay responded she will work it out with Tufts to make sure Somerville High School's students will have an outdoor graduation next year.
2. Executives Session Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18, 2003 and on Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium, the Board of Alderman will be holding their public hearing on the FY04 budget.
3. Provided to members the Budget Additions that were voted on June 3, 2003, which were amended June 11<sup>th</sup>, and are now part of the Public Hearing document.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)**

4. Enclosed for all members is a petition received from the Parent Coordinators for the Portuguese and Haitian community.
5. Provided to members the thank you note received from Bob Hardy and Mickey Curtin, Somerville Allied Veterans Council, acknowledging and extending their appreciation to the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee for their contributions to the Veterans Day Parade.
6. A memorandum from Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to all K-12 Staff and Administrators, regarding June 19, 2003 Professional Development is enclosed. This will take place at the Healey School and approximately 400-450 staff members will be in attendance.
7. Delia Marshall provided a petition with 340 signatures re: maintaining the current funding level for the Somerville String Program for the next school year, as well as a letter to the Superintendent of Schools. A copy is enclosed for members.
8. A letter from the East Somerville Community School staff, concerning no remedial reading instruction for the 2003-04 school year due to the budget deficit, is provided to all members
9. A request from SHS Football Coach, Tony Gulla, is enclosed. There has been a location and date change (Eagle Pond Lodge, Wilmot, NH to Camp Moosilauke, Orford, NH, August 20<sup>th</sup> through August 25<sup>th</sup>). The new request is at members' seats and the Superintendent will bring this item up under new business.
10. Enclosed is a notice from the Mayor's Office regarding three scheduled meetings on the Lincoln Park Community - new school; June 17, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at the LPCS Cafetorium, July 1 and July 15, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building, 220 Washington Street.
11. The Happenings at the Healey School newsletter and the West Somerville Neighborhood School Yearbook 2003 are provided for all members.
12. Enclosed for members is a correspondence to Dr. David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, from David Shapiro, Assistant City Solicitor re: City of Somerville request for permission to lease a portion of the Edgerly Education Center. Dr. Argenziano gave a brief update to the committee regarding this issue.
13. The Somerville Public Schools Professional Development Overview, June 2003, prepared by Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, is provided for all members.
14. Dr. Argenziano reported that 110 people were in attendance at the Question 2 Evening School Meetings and the number of waivers requested were 34 at the high school; the breakdown listed on the sheet provided is by grade, and there were 2 requests at the elementary level. The school department was able to complete this task of holding evening school meetings for \$5,800.00.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)**

15. Dr. Argenziano reported he met with the school committee last week and in regard to the many rumors that have been circulating about his leaving his position as Superintendent of Schools, he informed the committee and the community is that he will be here throughout the 2003-2004 school year and looks forward to presenting the class of 2004 their diplomas in June.

**VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. *Finance and Facilities of the Whole:* (Ms. Murray) June 3**

Subjects discussed:

- ✓ FY04 Budget

Ms. Murray reported on the following items:

- the overview of the Somerville Public Schools FY2003 and 04 Comparison Operations Budget, as was presented by Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration, Ms. Marie Ferrari.
- Informed the community about the discussion that took place regarding the SMILE Program, which will be located at the Capuano Early Childhood Center effective September 1, 2003.
- Reported that the school committee established a supplemental budget for FY04 to be submitted to the Board of Alderman and the decisions made by the committee increased the bottom line from \$46,400,000. to \$47,570,000. A vote was taken that evening to submit the school department budget in the amount of \$47,570,000.00. Ms. Murray requested it be noted that School Committee members Harris and Cardoso did vote on the budget excluding line items that pertained to direct members of their family.

Note: Ms. Harris and Ms. Cardoso left the Board of Aldermen Chambers at the time of voting on the two motions listed below.

MOTION: Motion made by Ms. Murray, seconded by Ms. Bauer, to approve the line item related to the girls varsity basketball coach in the FY04 \$46,400,000. budget.

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of Yes—6—Gay, Bauer, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray, and Rossetti; Absent—3—Cardoso, Harris, and O'Donovan.

MOTION: Motion made by Ms. Murray, seconded by Ms. Bauer, to approve the line item related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher at the Kennedy School in the FY04 \$46,400,000. budget.

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of Yes—6—Gay, Bauer, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray, and Rossetti; Absent—3—Cardoso, Harris, and O'Donovan.

**VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)**

Note: Ms. Harris and Ms. Cardoso returned to the Board of Aldermen Chambers at the time of voting on the motion listed below.

MOTION: Motion made by Ms. Murray, seconded by Ms. Taylor, to submit the FY04 school department budget in the amount of \$47,570,000.00.

Lengthy discussion followed. Mayor Gay discussed the reasons why she was not able to support increasing the school department budget to the amount of \$47,570.00. from the original \$46,200,000. that was talked about at the May 19<sup>th</sup> Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole meeting. She reminded members, how at that time, she stressed she could not go above that figure. School committee members voiced their feelings and discussed reasons for why they would be voting in favor of submitting the \$47,570,000.00. amount.

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of Yes—7—Cardoso, Harris, Bauer, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray, and Rossetti; No—1—Gay; Absent—1—O'Donovan.

**B. *Finance and Facilities of the Whole:* (Ms. Murray) June 11**

Subjects discussed:

✓ FY04 Budget

Prior to the Finance and Facilities meeting the School Committee held a Public Hearing on the FY04 budget. Continued discussion took place regarding the reductions the schools are facing, i.e., administration reductions, teacher reductions, more specifically reading teachers, string teacher for the music program, coach/tutor and secretary from the Next Wave/Full Circle School. Immediately following the Public Hearing, the Finance and Facilities Meeting took place. Discussion included the core list mentioned earlier, and putting some additions back into the supplemental list. Ms. Murray reported the committee did listen to input and ideas from people who attended the public hearing which helped in making some of those decisions. The Committee also talked about their planning as it related to how they would present the supplemental budget to the Board of Aldermen.

**C. *Finance and Facilities of the Whole:* (Ms. Murray) June 16**

Subjects discussed:

✓ FY04 Budget

Ms. Murray gave a brief report on the forty-five minute presentation the Superintendent gave to the Board of Aldermen on the FY2004 budget and supplemental budget list. She also talked about the increase that was voted on and the reasons the committee felt this was necessary. Ms. Murray informed the public that the Finance meeting was recessed in order to go into the regularly scheduled meeting of June 16, 2003 and would reconvene at the end of the regular meeting.

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business this evening.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **SHS Track Parents & Alumni Club Request** – Approved by voice vote.

Mr. James Monagle, Chairman, requested that the SHS Track Parents & Alumni Club have use of the Eugene C. Brune Field House at SHS on Saturday, November 29, 2003 to conduct the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Craft Fair to benefit the girls' and boys' track and cross-country teams at Somerville High School.

- B. **Agreement between City of Somerville and New Math Series Vendors**

The two finalists for the new math series are Scott Foresman for Grades K-5 and McDougal Littell for Grades 6-8. Each of these companies require an agreement between the City of Somerville and their company for a period of five years.

The Superintendent explained that although our city has a three year contract stipulation, he is recommending approval for an agreement between the City of Somerville and these two companies for a period of five years, in order to protect the cost that the school department has received. Approved by voice vote.

- C. **SHS Football Team Training Camp**

The Superintendent advised that there has been a location and date change from the original request. The new recommendation is as follows:

The Superintendent recommended that the SHS Football Team be able to attend Camp Moosilauke in Orford, N.H. from Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> to Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. Approved by voice vote.

- D. **Lease of Portion of Edgerly School**

Note: Ms. Bauer and Ms. Cardoso left the Board of Aldermen Chambers at the time of voting on the motion listed below.

After brief discussion and at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following action took place:

MOTION: Motion made by Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Harris, to determine that the portion of the Edgerly Education Center, 8 Bonair Street, Somerville, MA 02145, which includes floor one and floor two in the North and East Wings consisting of classrooms, corridors, office space, gymnasium, and cafeteria, is no longer needed for public education purposes and approves the rental of some or all of said space for early childhood education to a non-profit organization for the period of one to three years.



**IX. NEW BUSINESS (cont.)**

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of Yes–5–Harris, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray, and Rossetti; Absent–4–Cardoso, Gay, O'Donovan, and Bauer.

Note: Ms. Bauer and Ms. Cardoso returned to the Board of Aldermen Chambers at this time.

**E. Authorization for summer months – Approved by voice vote.**

1. Pay bills on school department accounts for which commitments have been made by bid or purchased before the close of schools, said bills to be ratified by the committee at the first meeting in September.
2. Expend from FY2004 Salaries Account funds for payment of salaries of personnel under all federal grants beginning in September.
3. Use Salaries Account and School Operations Account funds to pay encumbrances and salaries for summer programs
4. To authorize and/or reauthorize school department-revolving accounts. To accept all monies received by the school committee in connection with the conduct of said revolving accounts according to the purposes for which each fund may be spent in accordance with the statutes. The receipts to be held in each separate account may be expended by the school committee without further appropriation for the purposes of the program or programs from which receipts in each account were derived.

**X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Ms. Murray**

Regarding the SMILE Program, which will be located at the Capuano Early Childhood Center effective September 1, 2003, phone calls were made to every participant to see how many students may or may not attend the program. As an approximation, Ms. Murray reported of 40 calls made by one individual from the school department, just one student responded they did not want to go to the Capuano building.

There were no other items from board members reported out this evening.

**XI. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no items of communication this evening.

**XII. PERSONNEL**

There was no personnel report submitted for this evening's meeting.

**XIII. RESOLUTION:**

**Maureen S. Hilliard**

- WHEREAS, Maureen S. Hilliard, a Somerville teacher and an administrator, the last six years as principal of the Winter Hill Community School, is retiring after 40 years of service and dedication, and
- WHEREAS, Mrs. Hilliard began her successful education career in 1964 as a teacher at the Prescott School, and after serving as the education liaison for the city administration under Mayor S. Lester Ralph from 1970 to 1977, she returned to the Lincoln Park Community School as an ESL teacher in the Bilingual Department for eight years, and
- WHEREAS, She was elected vice-principal of the Lincoln Park Community School in 1985, a position she held until her election to the principalship of the Winter Hill Community School in 1997, and
- WHEREAS, Mrs. Hilliard, a graduate of Boston State College who earned a Master's Degree at Boston University, served on the Board of Directors, and was an officer in the Somerville Teachers Association, and was vice-president and president of the Somerville Administrators Association, serving on numerous negotiating committees, and
- WHEREAS, She was an organizer and officer of the town-wide Parent-Teacher Organization in Reading, and also served on various PTA groups in the town, therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That the Somerville School Committee proudly and publicly pay tribute to Mrs. Hilliard, and wish her and her family health and success in the future, and be it further
- RESOLVED: That these hard-earned Resolutions be entered into the minutes of tonight's meeting, and that a framed copy be presented to Mrs. Hilliard.

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m., by voice vote.

The Somerville School Committee reconvened in the committee room to continue the joint Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee and the Board of Aldermen.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano  
Secretary

Board of Alderman Finance Chair, William White, Jr., reconvened the joint Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee and the Board of Aldermen in the committee room at city hall, at 10:10 p.m., to complete discussion on the FY04 budget.

**III. FY04 Budget Discussion (cont.)**

Alderman White invited Mr. McGinn, Chief Financial Officer, to respond to the presentation made earlier by Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Argenziano concerning the fairness issues regarding the budget reductions and the impact it had on the school department vs. other departments. Mr. McGinn stated the whole budget process was a very difficult one and the impact was fairly significant in every department. He explained that the \$4 million dollar cut that the school department had to take was put in a context of overall reductions in departmental spending. The municipal budget is about 1/3 in terms of the school department budget, 1/3 all the other departments and about 1/3 of centralized costs. The largest of those centralized costs are health care, pension contributions, and veterans service. He advised the process was not 1/3 the school department against 2/3 of everything else. There are also centralized costs that support operations both on the school side as well as the other municipal departments. Other items Mr. McGinn talked about included fixed costs that the city has to absorb, mostly notably health care costs; State aid, over 5 million in state aid cuts are attributable to what would otherwise be considered school related aid and that is most notably \$4.9 million dollars in Chapter 70 funds which took a 20% cut; the Medicaid reimbursement issue - there has been change in the way Medicaid reimbursement is considered a school department revenue vs. a revenue of the city. Mr. McGinn stated regardless of what happened before, it is a revenue that goes to the general fund. He also mentioned how it is hard to assess the number of layoffs in schools vs. the layoffs required by the city. This is a dangerous comparison to start making because there are differences in the way both those budgets are structured.

When Mr. McGinn finished, discussion followed. He and Dr. Argenziano answered questions asked by the members of the Board of Aldermen. One question directed to the Superintendent was whether or not administrators, as a cost savings measure, would be willing to take a furlough, i.e., giving up one week's pay per administrator. Dr. Argenziano advised that this was a collective bargaining issue but he would send communication to the Somerville Administrators Association President and ask him to discuss the idea with the membership.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman Curtatone adjourned the meeting at 10:55 p.m.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano  
Secretary